

why this latter class of waves should affect the barometer more strongly in the case of the current with the eastward component. In the first place that current is proceeding from the tropics, the region in which all great atmospheric movements originate; and in the second place there is a greater mass of matter moving with it than with the other current, there being not only an equal quantity of dry air returning northwards to compensate for that which is flowing southwards, but there being also a considerable quantity of water vapour, which does not return southwards in the form of vapour, but, having been precipitated as rain, returns with the ocean currents. It may not be easy, but still it is perhaps possible, to demonstrate how this fact should explain the greater amplitude of the eastward than of the westward transmitted waves.

A. N. PEARSON

Meteorological Office, Bombay, September 4

#### Apparent Disappearance of Jupiter's Satellites

ON the morning of October 15 next Jupiter will appear to be deprived of the satellites usually attending him. This somewhat rare phenomenon has only been observed on four occasions during the present century, as follows:—

May 23, 1802  
April 15, 1826September 27, 1843  
August 21, 1867

In 1826 the disappearance of the Jovian moons extended over an interval of 2 hours; in 1843 the interval was thirty-five minutes; in 1867 1 hour 45 minutes; but on October 15 next the phenomenon only endures 19 minutes (*i.e.* from 3h. 56m. to 4h. 15m. a.m.). The second, third, and fourth satellites will be in transit across the disk, while the first will be occulted by the planet. On August 21, 1867, the first, third, and fourth were in transit, while the second was eclipsed, and afterwards occulted. These occasions offer excellent opportunities for comparing the appearance of the satellites while in transit, and for re-detecting the dusky spots which were formerly distinguished upon them by Dawes, Secchi, and others. On August 21, 1867, I observed the phenomenon with a 4*1*/<sub>2</sub> inch refractor, and noticed that the satellites appeared nearly as dark and distinct as their shadows while projected on the disk of their primary.

There is a remarkable agreement in the intervals separating this rare occurrence. Between the disappearances of May 23, 1802, and April 15, 1826, there is a period of 24 years less 38 days (= 8728 days), and between those of September 27, 1843, and August 21, 1867, 24 years less 37 days (= 8729 days). The other intervals are irregular, there being 17 years 165 days between that of 1826-1843, and 16 years 55 days between that of 1867-1883. If, however, there is a regularly-recurring cycle of nearly 24 years, as the above dates apparently indicate, after every alternate disappearance of these satellites, then we may expect a repetition of the phenomenon on about September 7, 1907.

W. F. DENNING

Bristol, October 6, 1883

#### The English Viper

IN regard to the English viper, I send a small contribution to the information that Mr. R. Langdon seeks in your issue for August 2 (p. 319). During a residence of more than twenty years on the outskirts of the Forest of Dean, the following facts concerning the adder's bite came more or less under my notice:—

1. A girl was bitten on the thumb, she sucked the bite, and her head, throat, and tongue swelled so much that she nearly died of suffocation and starvation. She was laid up more or less for six months, and folks said that she was never herself again, but became "silly-like," but so far as my memory goes she was but weak minded before the bite.

2. A gamekeeper was bitten on the thick part of the hand. He could hardly get home, and did not leave his bed for three months afterwards.

3. A woman in the Forest was bitten on the thumb, her arm swelled, and became black, but on the application of a herb (which I cannot identify, though she called it "adder's tongue"), the swelling went down at once, and in a day or so no trace of the bite remained.

4. Though the following case did not occur in our neighbourhood, yet as the patient was a family connection, and the details were given me by his mother, I bring it forward. The young man was bitten in the hand, and his arm swelled rapidly to such a size, that the coat sleeve had to be cut open. The youth was

ill for many months, and more than a year afterwards had not regained his former mental and physical condition.

5. Cows were often bitten on the legs, but more often on the udder; they never died from the bites.

6. Sheep often died; and lambs, so far as memory serves, did so invariably.

7. A pointer was bitten on the chest. The bite did not bleed, but the dog swelled quickly and could not walk; it was ill for a long time, but did not die.

8. I remember hearing that a little girl had died from the bite of an adder; but I mention the case with little confidence, as it did not come within the limits of my observation.

In 1865 or 1866 adders were more numerous in our neighbourhood than the "oldest inhabitant" had ever known them to be. The farmers were advised to turn their pigs into the fields, and the result was that wherever the pigs ranged the adders were nearly exterminated. A student of folk-lore would find a wide field in the traditions respecting the adder and its bite. In our neighbourhood the fat of the adder, especially that of the biter, was considered the best antidote for the bite. To roast an adder alive was not only a means of relieving the sufferer, but by making "the varmin squeal" it was said to draw others from their holes, and thus lead to their destruction.

KATHARINE B. CLAYPOLE

THOUGH not precisely in reply to Mr. Langdon's question, yet I add a short postscript to my wife's letter.

In this district we have two venomous snakes, the rattlesnake and the copperhead. The former is now becoming scarce, but the latter is still common. I have never been able to learn that any human being has been killed by the bite of either of these snakes in this neighbourhood. Bites of the rattlesnake are exceedingly rare, but I have known some, and heard of many persons who have been bitten by copperheads.

1. A lady was bitten on the foot at her garden gate; the leg swelled up to the thigh, and was exceedingly painful. She was more or less ill for a week.

2. A boy was bitten on the foot, and the leg swelled and turned black. No remedies were applied for many hours. A poultice of some herb which I have not been able to identify was put on the wound, and in twelve hours more the swelling had gone down, and the boy could walk.

3. In a third case of which I have heard the wound was said to reopen, or at least to become irritable, every year at the date of the bite.

4. A friend of mine had a dog which was bitten by a copperhead. He treated the wound with new milk, but the dog died.

5. In one case of which I have heard a man was bitten by a rattlesnake, but though I do not know the details of the case, the man is still alive.

6. A dog belonging to the friend mentioned above was bitten by a rattlesnake, and treated with new milk. He recovered.

I have heard of and known other cases of snakebite, but similar results followed. The remedies recommended for snakebite are too numerous to mention. Whisky in large doses is the most popular, and it never seems in such cases to produce intoxication. The common remedy—"the fat of the snake that bit you"—is, I suspect, an ingenious device for insuring the destruction of the reptile. It would appear as if the bite of the two snakes which I have mentioned can hardly be as deadly as is commonly supposed. The frequent swelling of the head and tongue appears to me to be caused by sucking the poison from the wound when a sore may have existed in the mouth. Much probably depends on the size and condition of the snake, the time of year, and the place and depth of the bite.

E. W. CLAYPOLE

New Bloomfield, Perry County, Pa., September 3

#### Solar Halo

I HAD the pleasure of witnessing, this morning, what Mr. Backhouse refers to in the last number of NATURE (p. 515) "as seen on rare occasions—a small portion of an ordinary halo brilliantly coloured."

Looking from a window at 9.40 a.m. towards the south-east, I saw a brilliant patch of light which for a moment I took to be the sun, but which I soon perceived was part of a solar halo, the sun being (roughly speaking) 20° distant in a horizontal line.

The colours were exactly those of the rainbow, especially at

the red end ; at the violet the light was so brilliant as to appear almost white. The only clouds at the time were bars of white cirri, and it was across some of these that the halo showed itself. This lasted for eight minutes, and then began to fade as the cirri moved away, but the colours again brightened, and were still visible, even when the sky was apparently clear, although, where the patch of colour remained, very faint cirri could still be perceived behind and through the brightness. At 9.51 the whole had disappeared. The wind at the time was nearly due north. I should like to know whether these solar halos are considered to be produced by ice-crystals in the higher regions. They appear to me quite as prevalent in summer as in winter.

Great Malvern, October 2

E. BROWN

#### A Remarkable Rainbow

THE phenomenon of supernumerary bows noticed by "L. C." on September 24, has been repeatedly observed and described. Various explanations have been suggested ; and "L. C." will probably find what he wants in Archdeacon Pratt's paper in *Phil. Mag.*, 4th series, vol. v. pp. 78-86 (1853).

A. RAMSAY

#### Meteor

A SPLENDID meteor was seen yesterday (Saturday) evening at about nine o'clock. It passed from the north-east, beneath the Pole star, to the west, where it vanished instantaneously without bursting. The nucleus measured, I should say, at least 5' of arc in breadth, and was extremely brilliant. A. TAUX

31, Mornington Road, N.W., October 7

#### A Palæolithic Flake

IT may interest some of your readers to know that I found last week a Palæolithic flake in some gravel at Gray's Inn Lane, where they are now making excavations for sewers. It is a somewhat large, flattish, subtriangular flake of implement-like form, exhibiting a large cone on the plain side towards the butt, and the other side showing several facets ; ochreous all over, and somewhat abraded. There is one in the British Museum from this spot, only it is an *implement*, black, lustrous, and spear-shaped, and seems to have come from a higher stratum than the flake before mentioned. Mr. W. G. Smith has an implement from Drury Lane—brought to him by an excavator instructed by him to look for implements at Shacklewell, and while at work at Drury Lane he found one, and, recognising it as an implement, brought it to Mr. Smith. It is subtriangular, worked all over on both sides, blackish indigo, lustrous, and very slightly abraded. These are as yet the only relics of Palæolithic man recorded as found in Central London.

49, Beech Street, E.C.

G. F. LAWRENCE

#### Hop "Condition"

I OBSERVE that it is asserted in a German technical journal that the golden microscopic dust on hops, which English growers call "condition," and in which the finest properties of the hop are supposed to reside, does *not* increase in quantity, as generally it is supposed to do, with the growth of the inflorescence. The quantity on the plants is declared to be as great when the buds are first developed as at maturity. Can any of your readers oblige me with observations or references in point ?

H. M. C.

#### JOACHIM BARRANDE

THE announcement that Barrande has passed away will be received with sincere regret in every quarter of the globe where geology is cultivated. His death severs another of the few remaining links that connect the present generation of workers with the early pioneers of geological science. Born in 1800, he was eventually appointed tutor to the young Duc de Bordeaux. So attached did he become to the royal family of France, that when Charles X. abdicated he voluntarily went into exile, accompanying his young pupil to Prague, which remained

his domicile thenceforward to the end of his long life. It was during the early years of his exile that he gave himself to natural history pursuits. In a brief visit to Vienna he came upon a copy of Murchison's "Silurian System," then recently published, and finding some of the fossils therein figured to resemble others which he had himself picked up in Bohemia, he on his return began to look more attentively at the rocks of his neighbourhood. Getting more interested with every fresh excursion, he began to open quarries and employ workmen to search for fossils. In order the more easily to direct their work he laboriously acquired their language. Year after year he continued these researches, devoting to them his time, energy, and fortune. He became the prince of fossil collectors. But at the same time he applied himself with unwearied industry to the scientific study of the fossils and of the rocks containing them. By degrees his labours took shape, and there resulted from them his colossal work, the "Système Silurien de la Bohême," a noble monument of scientific enthusiasm. It was begun as far back as 1852. Since that time no fewer than twenty-two massive quarto volumes of text and plates have been published. Undeterred by the remonstrances of a publisher who would insist on counting the cost and the sale, Barrande was his own publisher, and prosecuted his labour of love down to the end of his life. His numerous separate papers on geological subjects began to appear in 1846, and have been continued to the present time. Living in exile for upwards of half a century, Barrande occasionally visited his native country, and took a keen interest in scientific progress there, but remained an unflinching royalist, refusing to do anything or accept any distinction which might seem to compromise his political principles. He even declined to be nominated a corresponding member of the French Academy. But honours were heaped upon him by the scientific societies of other countries. Due tribute will no doubt be paid to his scientific achievements ; for the present we have time only to offer these few lines to the memory of one of the most unwearied and profound students of palæontology, and one of the most upright and honourable of men.

#### THE SANITARY CONGRESS ON HOUSE SANITATION

A CONSIDERABLE amount of attention was given at the recent Congress of the Sanitary Institute in Glasgow to the question of house construction, and to the evils which are attendant upon the present system under which human habitations are erected both in the metropolis and elsewhere. When it is remembered how large a portion of time the inhabitants of this country are compelled, by reason of climate and otherwise, to spend inside their dwelling houses, it is obvious that the health both of the present and of future generations must be largely dependent on the sanitary condition of those dwellings, and that very earnest consideration should be given, both by experts in matters of building and also by the public themselves, to the sanitary details of house accommodation. And yet it is notorious that houses, which are faulty in almost every particular relating to health, are week by week being run up by hundreds and thousands ; that even where money does not enter into consideration the dwelling-rooms of mansions are left without any provision for ventilation whatever ; and that both the wealthy and the poor are stricken with disease by reason of the foul air which has been conveyed from the sewers into their homes as the result of arrangements which are, in point of fact, almost always more costly than should have been the more simple appliances which would have prevented the possibility of such an occurrence.

As the law now stands there are certain evils which